Monsoon Nights

A short story of 1,500 words

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Jacaranda looked up as she heard the unfamiliar sound of a bamboo flute lilting from the balcony. She heard it many times before, but this was the first time she had truly heard it. She had recalled something, but she did not know how it had happened, it was like she was in a daze for the last couple of days.

"Mistress Jinitro, you have been quiet this whole time," observed a suave man wearing a white tuxedo slouching against the shaft of the elevator's suite, "Are you sure you are fine with having no one else accompanying you on the Professor's lectures about various species which occupy our entire cosmology? Such fascinating stuff, that!"

The businesswoman looked down at her toes, the texture of the aubergine velvet carpet reminded her of him, but details kept slipping away like the water slowly draining from a bathtub, words slowly draining from the abyss. The man looked arrogant for only a moment, but it soon cleared when he saw her face. It was like déjà vu all over again. Jacaranda saw how the walls of the elevator were opaque and seemed to press upon the two of them. She shuddered briefly, how she longed to escape from the elevator's presence.

As if the heavens were merciful upon her, there was a loud chime and with a whisper the doors glided open and Jacaranda stepped forwards.

There, directly in front of her, were innumerable beings of all shapes and sizes, some of them were staring aloofly at nothing in particular. But there was an excitable tension in the room, which seemed to crackle in the air like a faint electrical static. Jacaranda thought nothing of this atmospheric change.

That was when she saw the Professor speak, the orator of this very moment…

Even now she could not question how dashing Helikoth had looked with his violet locks of hair- but there was something about his own charisma and quaint mannerisms that charmed her, even if she could put it to words… There Jacaranda stood amongst the others, still dressed in sparkling nanofibers and the latest fashion of the distant future, but she tried to hide behind a spiralling pillar instinctively in the hopes that no-one else could see her… Alas, it was all in vain.

<Introducing Mistress Jacaranda Jinitro, heir of the Quadrant Hyperion et Minor.>
The announcer chimed in telepathically, but if she could have blush she would have.
One by one, several unblinking eyes and holographic cameras stared in her direction.

“Will you not speak,” the Professor of the Draconic scoffed, admiring her blue marble necklace which sparkled in all directions. If one could describe the sight, it would be as if the Milky Way galaxy itself was contained within the whorls of a particularly large opal.

“Said opal was called the Dragon’s Breath,” The lady of the hour noted hurriedly, “Draconic puns aside, it’s an exquisite mineral found on the minor planet called Earth.”

Four-dimensional screens caught the suave expression of a certain lady as she made her way towards the upper echelons of society. Now that she had caught her prey unaware, Laura Lensflare was insatiably curious as to how exactly Jacaranda had procured such a fine necklace in a short period of time. It wasn’t every day that otherworlders revealed their planet of origin after all. “Is that so,” Laura scribbled down something on her touchscreen.

A crystalline microphone was jammed in the heir’s face as Laura smiled very coldly indeed, the camera lenses in her bionic implant capturing every detail of the heir’s questioning... “Care to tell us more details as to where exactly you hid that birth-certificate of yours? Such shame! Here in my notes I thought the Dragon’s Breath was manufactured in a laboratory!” Cold sweat beaded and fell, but before the heir could answer there was a loud outcry...

“Enough,” the professor spoke under his breath, “I will not have you harass the heir with your insolence. It matters not where she came from, nor the origins of this opal.” Silence. “Is it true that according to the rumours being spoken, you were planning to be engaged to the heiress?” Laura, again. “News travels faster than light,” More silence punctuated the air.

“Someone, take this reporter away before she starts another Galactic War IV.” spoke up a figure next to an unlit podium. <Mister Rhilox LX at your service,> He added privately.

With a snap of his clawed fingers, Laura was quickly escorted away, as the Professor had a faint flash of recognition at Rhilox. The heiress could easily tell that Rhilox and Helikoth had a shared history of shady deals, but the professor tended not to talk about his relations.

“Family of yours, perchance?”

“You could say that, Jacaranda.” the Professor chuckled, but not before whispering in her right ear, “Come and see me after the lecture is finished, we shall partake of anything you-”

Jacaranda nodded- for a future fiancée, Helikoth sure liked to keep his secrets locked up and often wore his heart on his sleeves... Such idioms were once common back on planet Earth- but in the intergalactic code of the universe; sayings such as those were often intermingled with graphical lexicons and often lost their original translations in the process. There was not much need for speech when telepathy was sufficient enough to get the meaning across.

Although the heir still wondered if the translators were on the fritz today- it seemed that most of the holommunicators were acting up once more. This was also due to the amount of telepathic residue in the area. Jacaranda caught a glimpse of an old friend who had waved...

Crowd control was at its breaking point today due to all of the aliens that showed up just to see the famed orator, but they all strained to get a glimpse of the rather mysterious Rhilox.

Unfortunately for them Rhilox LX was not in the mood for talking in the vicinity of others.

<Is that the same Jacaranda we saw in college?> the old classmate pointed out, <Oh, it is!>

Back in the present once more, Jacaranda now turned her attention towards a tentacle which waved slovenly, dripping its brine all over the carpet. It was a familiar sight, but the alien seemed to be quite friendly with the locals. Helikoth stood aside, but he seemed to be lost in his own thoughts. It was as if the sight of Jacaranda's acquaintances fazed him somewhat.

Helikoth seemed to be distracted for now since the other alien was dripping ichor and slime all over the bannisters- and from the look of things it seemed most likely that the heir and the professor had to pick up their heated (and romantic) conversation for another time...

The intense heat wave of the incoming monsoon season made the heir recall of their past conversations concerning their future together, but as she thought of such things the words seemed to slip away easily- as though they were never thought of in the first place...

As the professor continued the lecture while once more being at ease, Jacaranda spotted a lavender scented note, written in the professor's elegant cursive writing (an art that she thought once lost to the dusty archives)... She picked it up and saw that it was a curt invitation to drink *Hadronium infused mocha at the Gilded Liaison tonight at 8 pm.*

The heir wasn't sure if it was a mere trick of the light, but the words seemed to shimmer and shine like the night stars... Jacaranda blinked and the stars and shimmer faded away. She swore that she could see a devilish sparkle in his icy blue eyes at the very thought... The crowds seemed to listen enraptured to the professor's every word, but he seemed focused on the heir for just a second before he looked away to focus on the lecture at hand.

Was it mischief that she saw in his eyes? Or was it more than that? Longing? Desire?

There were so many words that were left unsaid, which couldn't even capture the emotion of that very moment. She wondered if he had known that she would like to get to know him better at least. They were to be engaged to each other after everything else was said and done. She straightened her shoulders with confidentiality, under the stern eye of Rhilox.

Rhilox didn’t seem to approve of paying for their engagement, based on his stormy expression. She could tell by the look in his very eyes, but for once she didn’t care... Jacaranda was just an heir, but the very universe could tilt in her favour once more!

All manners of eyes were upon her, globular eyes, eyes which shone like the skies above. Even though Jacaranda knew that the professor only seemed to have eyes for her, who could say, really? In any case, Jacaranda had to accept- and everything would be *just fine*...